Food Not Bombs, San Francisco Homelessness Politics, and Liberal Regimes of Governmentality

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San Francisco is commonly seen as a "left coast city." A city blasted by conservative pundits and politicians for its secular, hedonistic, and socialistic practices. In some ways this perspective of the Bay Area is correct, as San Francisco has large and active left wing community which is noticeably by massive critical mass bike rides, anti-war protests larger enough to shut down the entire city, and sporadic insurgent campaign by the cities marginalized, such as was seen by the energetic campaign to elect Green Party member and former city supervisor Matt Gonzalez.[1] When it comes to official city policy though, it is not the critical mass'ers and anti-war demonstrators that set the agenda, but the pro-growth and business interests. From the post-war era to today the cities development and political machines have been dominated by corporate interests and wealthy business owners such as Bank of America and Bechtel.[2] Nowhere is the liberal pro-growth perspective more obvious then in San Francisco housing and homelessness politics.

The general formula for San Francisco housing policy is exemplified by former mayor Willie Brown who, in response to a question about the lack of affordable housing, argued that those who cannot afford to live in San Francisco should think about moving. It is also expressed by the long standing, though denied, practice of confiscating and destroying houseless people's property, passage and enforcement of anti-camping and panhandling laws (one of the first major US cities to do so), and the destructive gentrification plans that have removed low-income housing and closed down the cities single room occupancy hotels. The most extreme example of the San Francisco elites anti-homeless agenda is the former "Matrix" program of Mayor Frank Jordan (which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter), but the foundation to the revanchist policies of Jordan have been central to city policy for decades and are currently promoted by "progressive" mayor Gavin Newsom.

Where there is repression there is also resistance and nowhere is this truer than in a city like San Francisco. For decades cadres of houseless and precariously housed individuals have struggled against the conservative policies of the San Francisco board of supervisors. From the Diggers, to the hippies, to the residents of the Mission, Height, and Tenderloin districts, San Franciscans have actively confronted and resisted the pro-business city government.

The acts of resistance by the houseless community and their radical allies in Food Not Bombs is a story that has been forgotten. Food Not Bombs is an anarchist "organization" comprised of autonomous individuals and affinity groups that gleans and gathers wasted vegetarian food and serves it in open public spaces. To Food Not Bombs, feeding is an active of political protest, a symbolic and literal, "Fuck You" to the politicians, wealthy business owners, and middle-class tourists who clog San Francisco's downtown business district. By forcing homelessness, and poverty into the public view, Food Not Bombs serves as a reminder that countless people are being left behind, if not intentionally harmed, by the cities supposedly liberal and progressive policies. Food Not Bombs also serves as a means for the hungry, the houseless, the marginalized, and the disenchanted to eat together, to organize together, and to empower one another.

This chapter is about the rise of Food Not Bombs, their role in highlighting the mistreatment of the homeless in San Francisco, and their impact on Art Agnos administration from 1988 to 1992. In this chapter, I contend that the liberal policies of Art Agnos towards the homeless follows the logic of what Michel Foucault called "governmentality." Because the

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homeless often exist outside the confines of traditionally regulate politics and because they often disrupt commercial flows (especially regarding tourist dollars), I claim that Food Not Bombs and self-organized and radical homeless actions (such as public tent cities) illustrate one of the greatest threats to a biopolitical regime and liberal conceptions of governmentality. This chapter will begin a theoretical and historical discussion of homelessness followed by a narrative of Food Not Bombs during the Art Agnos's mayoral administration and concluded with a brief discussion of liberal regimes of governmentality.

Contrasting Theories on Homelessness:

"The law, in its majestic equality, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the street, and to steal their bread." -Anatole France, The Red Lily

During the 1980s the "plight" of the homeless gained a central place within media and public discussions. On one side of the spectrum, homelessness is viewed as an individual choice see able-bodied homeless men and women overcome with sloth, alcoholism, and other large character flaws choosing to live on the streets over engaging in work (table 1). These individual failings can be solved through institutions that promote moral well-being and hard-work while punishing those who act asocially. Within this revanchist perspective falls the "broken windows" theory, which posit that vandalism, panhandling, and public sleeping and urination, act as social signals to criminals that the public order is breaking down. In general, the revanchist perspective, claims that society needs to crack down on asocial behaviors before an environment is created that allows rapists, murders, and other serious criminals to thrive.[3] To limit, or ban, "asocial" behavior and unsanitary practices- from sleeping under bridges, to aggressive panhandling, to relieving oneself in public- revanchist policies are needed to discourage 'negative' behavior.

On other side of the spectrum exists a structural argument for the rise in homelessness. This perspective argued that the neoconservative policies of the Reagan administration, most notably the defunding of HUD and Section 8 housing and the closing of mental institutions throughout the country, as well as reverberations from global economic forces associated with free trade (table 1), led to a rapid increase in homeless populations. This perspective, often associated with liberal and progressives, results in an understanding of homelessness that locates its source in state and international institutional structures. In this narrative the homeless are portrayed as unwilling victims of forces beyond their control. The homeless should then be entitled access to government services and programs- from homeless shelters (where available) to food stamps and other welfare programs- but only at the cost of further agency and freedom. Within this view, the only solution to institutionalized homelessness is through further institutionalization.

In reality, what makes issues of homelessness so complicated is that both perspectives coexist within the social construction of the problem. This is why Kim Hopper sees rectifying "the tension between providing sanctuary for the helpless and disciplining the unruly"[4] as being the central political issue. Generally this tension is addressed by categorizing individual homeless as either "bad" or "good." Those that are deemed good are institutionalized into the system and taken care of, all be it poorly, while those deemed "bad" are punished for being unwilling or unable to conform to societal norms. Within this solution, the homeless are

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routinely and universally disempowered and denied agency and political autonomy. This is commonly seen through political discussions of the homeless that treat them as not part of the larger political community but merely as a "problem."

The treatment of the homeless as community problems and not members has its history (within the English tradition at least) to the Vagrancy acts and Poor Laws of the 19th century. These laws, created following the closing of the English commons, attempted to criminalize sloth, nomadism, and force peasant communities into the newly developing industrial/urban economic system. These vagrancy laws connected transient and vagrant existence with choice, sin, and abnormality. These laws attempted to discipline the work ethic onto a group of people resist (either by choice or circumstance) that form of coding. These acts defined much of 19th century English and American homelessness attitudes. According to Gerald Daly in *Homeless: Policies, Strategies, and Lives on the Street* (1996) it was not until the late 19th century, and the hard work of sanitation and public health activists, that the public attempted to address homelessness through charitable housing and services, in lieu of punishment.

These "charitable" lodging were not devoid of problems either. Daly writes, that "...these philanthropic capitalists used housing as an education device to impart middle-class values to members of the working classes. The deserving and undeserving poor were clearly distinguished: the former were dealt with by such private groups as the Charity Organization Society, the latter by the Poor Law Board."[5] Thus, charitable spaces for the homeless served as a means of instilling a middle-class, protestant work ethic. Much like the system of today, those who rejected this class-based indoctrination and who refused to conform to religious dogma where deemed as "undeserving" and denied lodging, food, and immunity from vagrancy laws.

Starting with the rise of the progressives a unique milieu of interests ended up supporting increased funding and support for the homeless. This included "proponents of the 'social gospel' [who] sought to civilize society; advocates for good government [who] worked to restrict the power of ward politicians who controlled the immigrant vote; and 'housers' [who] reated model homes, 'neighborhood units,' and garden cities, all based on British precedent"[6]. This collection of religious activists, progressives, and urban planners, all wished to see the expansion of government programs and services to help the homeless.

It was not until the Great Depression though that the federal government really became involved in housing, food, and other basic social services. Even during the height of the Great Depression, providing government serves to help the poor was controversial do to fears that middle-class and other tax payers would be forced to pay for low income whites, black, and immigrants who lacked the motivation or desires to work. This led "some Americans [to] question whether they should be allowed to own cars, to retain life insurance policies, to vote, to maintain citizenship, or to buy liquor"[7], while across the country loitering and vagrancy laws where either strengthened or newly enforced. When the coffers of charitable organizations started to run out, around in 1933, the federal government finally started to get involved in addressing work and housing issues. These federal housing agencies and work programs failed to provide a universal safety net for all American families and workers. Partly due to the decentralized nature of the programs, the strong influence of conservative South Democrats, and a lack of a welfare foundation ensured that most of the housing and work programs where run by

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local or state agencies. In many instances, these benefits where parceled though a gendered, nativist, and racialized lens. [8]

US housing and welfare programs started to become developed during the 1960s and 1970s under the guidance of the Johnson and Carter administrations. During this time, the federal government got involved in the building and leasing of apartments, single-room occupancy hotels, and other low-income housing through HUD funding and urban development. This process was, quickly stopped by the Reagan administration shortly after this victory in 1980. During Reagan " the inventory of low-rent publicly assisted united under construction dropped from 126,800 in 1970, to 20,900 in 1980, to 9.700 in 1988"[9]. This decrease in low-income, government subsidized housing, contributed to a radical increase in the US homeless numbers, and marked a drastic turn-back towards emergency housing and shelters and dependence on charitable organizations for support.

As can be seen, through the majority of US history the majority of homeless services (food kitchens, emergency food relief, emergency and half-way sheltering) are done by charitable organizations. These charitable organizations enforce a certain moral code, as can be seen by the fact that many missions require attendance at a religious service in order to get food or board, most have early curfews, and almost all emergency shelters have a zero tolerance for alcohol and drugs- often forcing people who are already drunk to brave the potentially deadly temperatures outside. While, the few government run services require an acquiescence to a limiting of civil liberties through mandatory drug testing, forced mental health services, and a zero-tolerance policy towards criminal behavior. This hostility towards criminal behavior might be understandable if homelessness was not itself illegal.

Overall, the homeless can be seen as a radically marginalized group. In general the homeless lack political organization, partly because of their precarious position and partly due to concerns with losing much needed services if they become political active. In addition, city policies of harassment, arbitrary arrests (which turn into warrants if the homeless are unable to pay off the ticket or fine), and exclusion ordinances have made the homeless either unable or unwilling to organize politically.

Many within the homelessness literature correctly analyze this lack of political inclusion. For instance, Leonard Feldman in *Citizens without Shelter* (2006)[10] uses the lens of Giorgio Agamben's *Homo Saucer* (1995).[11] Through this lens, the homeless are ideal examples of bare life, as they are both placed within the disciplinary regime of the state yet excluded from participation. Both Feldman and Kathleen Arnold[12] claim that citizenship is intimately connected ones ability to house them self. This connection emerges since, a house is the location of private life, according to Hannah Arendt and other republicans, and plays an essential role in the maintenance of the private individual and is necessary to being political engaged. Without a house, the homeless must live their private life within the public sphere. This would be the inclusion of *homo economicus*, the bane of republican virtue for Arendt. Talmadge Wright[13] and Don Mitchell[14] also see this problem, and argue that in existing in public space the homeless have to engage in private activities (sleeping, urinating, love making), which is seen as an invasion of the public. In this regard they bring basic and bare life into the public realm.

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This question of agency is central to the homelessness "problem." Both perspectives on homelessness- revanchist and liberal- have a difficulty with the agency question. For the revanchist narratives sees the homelessness a choice, free from structural limitations. This can be seen by Kelling And Wilson who sees public urination, for example, as an individual asocial choice, instead of a problem associated with the lack of public restrooms. This view does not realize that, though choices are made, these choices are commonly constrained by structural and institutional forces. For instance, many on the street face a choice to conform to the rules of missions and government aid programs, or live their own lives on the street and face harassment, arrest, and crime. This, while a choice, is coerced and limited.

On the flip side, the liberal perspective, denies agency both as a cause of homelessness and as a solution to. Many homeless, as Dunn points out, enjoy the freedom and liberty that is associated with being nomadic, while many others, actively choose to remain on the streets over lives within the missions and emergency shelters. While, this perspective is correct in pointing out the structural and institutional impacts on homelessness it does not adequately provide those on the streets, shelters, and cars, any agency.

This common lack of political agency, is why examples of self-organization and homeless activism, appear so powerful and inspiring. Don Mitchell, Randall Amster,[15] Jeff Ferrell,[16] Talmadge Wright, and Leonard Feldman, all view homeless encampments and grassroots homeless activism as an essential step towards self-empowerment and political involvement. Talmadge Wright in Out of Place provides a detailed analysis of two homeless encampments- the Student Homeless Alliance in San Jose and Tranquility City in Chicago. Both cases are, to Wright, examples, of individual and community empowerment that, at the same time, resist the imposed political and spatial order created by city governments and neo-liberal economic politics. Overall, to Wright and the others, self organized homeless camps and grassroots homeless activism serve as a way to provide the homeless a source of agency that they otherwise are denied access to. The power of grassroots homeless empowerment is also central to Randall Amster's analysis of homelessness *Lost in Sight* Jeff Ferrell's *Tearing Down the Streets*. To Amster the homeless are treated as invaders of the public and not as members of the local community. In fact, Amster claims that those in power see the homeless as willfully rejecting control and because of that they are seen as an enemy as well. This is why city officials criminalize their behavior. While to Ferrell, the homeless (as well as squatters, busker's, and graffiti artists) represent the creativity and power of anarchist organizing. To Ferrell, these discarded figures of urban life, without top-down planning, create encampments, create and enforce norms and rules, and do so while constantly being attacked and harassed by city officials.

The view of Ferrell, Amster, Wright, and Mitchell is what I would call the noble homeless perspective (table 1). Their perspective views homelessness as a source of freedom and liberty. This view, is best expressed, according to Leonard Feldman, through Thomas Dunn's "spiritual homelessness." Dunn, views the homeless figure as a social nomad and a resistor to state power and wishes to form a society that does not harass, but instead, enables and supports homelessness. To Dunn and other leftist scholars of resistance, the "homelessness problem" is an artificial problem, created not by the homeless but by the liberal society that fears and wishes to ostracize them. As a solution to the problem anti-homelessness laws need to be

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removed and the homeless need to have, what Henri Lebvere called, a "right to the city" that allows them the space, both geographic and political, to organize and empower one another.

No matter what, the solution to the homelessness "problem," if there is a problem, is not through the suppression but the cultivation of agency and through grassroots activism and empowerment. Examples of this form of group empowerment are homeless tent cities that exist at the margins of cities, under overpasses, and occasionally, as we shall see later, in UN Plaza in front of San Francisco City Hall.

Table 1: Different Perspectives on Homelessness

	Source of "homelessness" problem	Solution to "homelessness problem"
Individual Choice: The Noble Homeless	Rooted in societies attempt to construct a disciplinary and regulated society. Anti-homelessness laws create the problem not the homeless	Remove laws that punish the homeless and provide the space for homeless communities to self-empower themselves
Individual Choice: Revanchist	Homelessness is the result of poor choices or moral failing (sloth, laziness)	Punish asocial behavior that harms society. Make the choice of being homeless more costly by decreasing the benefits and increasing the punishment.
Structurally formed: Liberal progressive	Homelessness is worsened by structural forces, both economic and political.	Provide programs to counter the structural problems of homelessness- examples include lack of affordable housing, lack of medical and mental care, lack of job training, etc.

Food Not Bombs:

Food Not Bombs can trace its roots to the burgeoning anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s. Peace and community activists from the Coalition for Direct Action at Seabrook formed the Food Not Bombs after a May 24-25, 1980 direct action that led to 4,000 activists getting arrested. On the second day, May 25, Brain Feigenbaum was charged with assaulting an officer as a grappling hook was set to have struck the officer on the head. To raise money for Brian's legal fee's 30 activists got together and started holding bake sales in Harvard Square. To attract attention to their baked good, the activist would dress up like military officers and stand next to a large poster that said "It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the Air Force has to hold a bake sale to buy a B1 bomber." The activists pretended to be general's selling vegan pastries in an attempt to raise money to purchase bombers and continue research into nuclear weapons. Shortly after the bake sale's started Brian's chargers were dropped and the

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collective started organizing a larger protest of the First National Bank of Boston, who had many board members that where sponsoring and funding the Seabrook nuclear power station.[17]

To highlight the absurdity of weapons funding, in a country that had millions of hungry citizens, the activists decided to organize a mock 1930's soup kitchen in front of the shareholders meeting in March of 1981. The group invited Boston's local homeless community to stop by, eat and protest with them. The action was a success, as after 50 homeless stopped by to eat and talk with the protesters, while the shareholder's had to walk around the scene in order to enter the meeting.

After the soup kitchen protest the activists decided to start combining food with peace and anti-nuclear activism. These activists rented a house together on Harvard Street and began soliciting food donations from health food stores and vegetarian grocery stores. The group start collecting food that was going to be wasted ever day and began dropping off food daily with Rose's Place, a battered women's shelter, as well as with drug rehab clinics, homeless service groups, immigrant rights organizations, and other progressive and left-wing service groups, while every Monday they would cook vegetarian food and distribute the food for free in Harvard square while handing out literature about military interventions in South America, nuclear weapons, and Reagan social and military policy.

During these first few years, the activists would spray paint graffiti around the city denouncing nuclear escalation and condemning the lack of free food. In front of corporate grocery stores the group would write, " Money for Food Not Bombs," which was shortened and became the name of the group. They also helped organize the June 12, 1982 action, "March for Nuclear Disarmament" in New York City and the "Free Concert for Nuclear Disarmament in May of 1982; they worked closely with the Cambridge City Hall in organizing anti-Nuclear power days of action; set up the Boston "Pee Party" to protest the escalation of the War on Drugs by Reagan; distributed free food in front of Fenway park during in the 1986 MLB play offs; and where involved in a 500 person impromptu "town hall" meeting in the lobby of the Boston Federal Building.

Unlike many of the "new social movements" that came to existence in the 1970s and 80s, Food Not Bombs, by highlighting over consumption and materialism, with a commitment to peace, and animal and homeless rights activism, the group was quickly able to expand its issue-base and resist being a single-issue organization. While, originally concerned with peace organizing the group quickly moved to the forefront of homeless rights activism. The group readily connecting the dots between hunger and militarism did this. According to co-founders Keith McHenry and C.T. Bulter, "Globally, we continue to spend more time and resources developing, using, and threatening to use weapons of massive human and planetary destruction than on nurturing and celebrating life. By spending this money on bombs instead of food, our government perpetuates and exacerbates poverty's violence by not providing food for everyone in need".[18] By viewing hunger and poverty as connected with militarism and a culture of violence, Food Not Bombs was not locked into a single-issue form of politics and in fact developed a complex understanding of structural connections. According to an early San Francisco Food Not Bombs flier,

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> Because... FOOD is a RIGHT not a privilege! Because there is enough food for everyone to eat! Because SCARCITY is a patriarchal LIE! Because a woman should not have to USE HER BODY to get a meal, or have a place to sleep! Because when we are hungry or homeless we have the RIGHT to get what we need by panning, busking or squatting! Because POVERTY is a form of VIOLENCE not necessary or natural! Because capitalism makes food a source of profit not a source of nutrition! BECAUSE FOOD GROWS ON TREES. Because we need COMMUNITY CONTROL. Because we need HOMES NOT JAILS! Because we need....FOOD NOT BOMBS[19]

Within these statements, Food Not Bombs had by the mid-1990s developed an analysis of power relations that connected hunger, war, patriarchy, capitalism, houselessness, and violence. This original analysis was not found by the early 1980s activists, and illustrates the large move towards an anarchist politics that happened within Food Not Bombs open opening a chapter in San Francisco.

While the issues central to the group, might not have been written in stone, Food Not Bombs has always adhered to a few core beliefs. The group has always embraced a non-violent politics. Their non-violence, requires a commitment to animal rights and a vegetarian diet, since, "mainstream food production is an inherently violent process, involving the slaughter of millions of animals and the poisoning of our air, water, soil, and bodies with chemical fertilizers and pesticides."[20] This commitment to non-violence does not mean that the group was neither radical, nor confrontational. In fact, the founders of the group considered it to be a revolutionary group as

> Food Not Bombs is an organization devoted to developing positive personal, political, and economic alternatives. Revolutionaries are often depicted as working to overthrow the government by any means necessary. Food Not Bombs groups in general do not have the time or resources to attack, tear down, and overthrow existing death culture. However, not spending our time trying to overthrow the existing power structure does not mean never struggling with it. By simply exerting our basic right to free speech and association, we challenge the power elite, and they will try to stop us from focusing on what needs to be done. We want to create new alternatives and life-affirming structures from the ground up. We want to replace the culture of death with a culture 'Plumbers not bombs,' 'Day-care Not Bombs,' and 'Health Care Not Bombs.[21]

In effect, Food Not Bombs can be seen as an ideal example of anarchist direct-action. Even though, direct action is commonly associated with destructive or stalling tactics, there does exist a positive, constructive understanding of direct action within the anarchist and Marxist traditions. Whether called 'dual power' or 'direct action, Food Not Bombs activists are directly working to create the alternative institutions they wish see in a future society. They are not just petitioning the state to feed the hungry or house the houseless, they are feeding and housing them themselves. They also try to empower the community by having an uncompromising commitment to consensus decision-making. When combined, Food Not Bombs, according to Butler and McHenry "responds to poverty and lack of self-esteem in two ways. First, we provide food in an open, respectful way to whomever wants it. We will not make people jump through any bureaucratic hoops designed to control, humiliate, and often punish the people who are poor. Second, we invite people who receive food to become involved in providing that food".[22] These commitments illustrate how much Food Not Bombs differs from the three dominant views regarding homeless that was discussed in the previous section.

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Agnos vs. Food Not Bombs

The second era of Food Not Bombs was started in late 1987 when co-founder's Keith McHenry and his wife moved to San Francisco. A few months after moving McHenry connected with activists with the anti-nuclear group the Abalone Alliance and started up San Francisco Food Not Bombs. The first feeding happened on December 27, 1987.

At the time of the first feed Art Agnos had yet to take office. Agnos, the mayor from 1988-1992, was a progressive city supervisor. The election of the progressive Agnos was seen by many to be a move away from the more corporatist democratic policies of Dianne Fienstein.

The San Francisco chapter of Food Not Bombs was the third in the country and within a few months it became the most well known Food Not Bombs chapter, and spearheaded the expanse of Food Not Bombs chapters throughout the country. The impact of SF Food Not Bombs is immense. SF Food Not Bombs published a month newsletter, the Food Not Bombs Menu, that became the mouthpiece for the movement. While originally, it only highlighted the issues pertinent to the SF chapter of Food Not Bombs, by 1994, it started to highlight international Food Not Bombs news. During the first four years of its publication, the Food Not Bombs menu came out sporadically. Even so, it had a huge impact, as McHenry and the others sent copies to every other Food Not Bombs chapter and most infoshops and radical books stores in the country. The menu served as a means of highlighting the police harassment of Food Not Bombs activists in San Francisco, and also provided people with the basic knowledge of starting their own chapter. By the end of 1992, this tactic had worked, as SF Food Not Bombs had a national gathering on Columbus Day, which had 70 participants, from 20 of the 40 national chapters in the country. The end of the Jordan administration in 1996, well over 200 chapters exist in the United States, with additional chapters found in most Western European countries, as well as in Canada.

The menu was also influential in altering and shaping the politics of Food Not Bombs. As I mentioned in the last section, Food Not bombs always rejected hierarchical politics and organizing, and connected issues of homelessness with capitalism, the state, and militarism, it was the SF chapter of Food Not Bombs that first openly embrace an anarchist politics. The Cambridge and Washington D.C., chapters at the same time did not necessarily think of themselves as anarchist. It was actually, McHenry that was most responsible for framing Food Not Bombs as an anarchist group. According to two San Francisco Chronicle articles, “Making Grub not War” and “An Anarchist in the Soup Kitchen”, starting in 1989 the group was actively referring to itself in the media as an anarchist group. Because of the large number of arrests in San Francisco the SF chapter received massive amounts of news coverage and after 100 year of mass arrests the group had become synonymous with anarchist politics in the United States.

As for the arrests, it is important to note that activists with the Cambridge and Washington D.C., chapters of Food Not Bombs have never been arrested for distributing food without a permit and other than mass civil-disobediences no activists where ever arrested.

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The SF chapter's easily makes up for this lack of arrests. In an eight year period, between August of 1988 to the end of Frank Jordan's administration in January of 1996, over 1000 activists where arrested from Food Not Bombs for either distributing food without a permit, or for disobeying a court injunction against feeding in public areas. Even though 1000 activists were arrested in that period of time, with Keith McHenry himself getting arrested 100 times, only one person, Robert Kahn was ever sentenced to jail time. Kahn was arrested in 1994 for disobeying a court injunction and was sentenced to 60 days in county jail.[23] For eight years the SF police would arrests Food Not Bombs activists and then either the district attorney would drop the chargers or a city judge would. In fact, a member of the District Attorneys office was quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle as saying "The police can't just go out and arrest people if we're not going to prosecute."[24] Alas, this is exactly what happened for years. In fact, on September 9th,1989, a day after Mayor Agnos offered Food Not Bombs members a moratorium from police harassment, and only an hour before a meeting with the Mayor over a possible permit, Keith McHenry was detained by police officers in the Haight district for putting up a Food not Bombs flier. Former Food Not Bombs member Richard Edmondson humorously noted "Thus the arrests, and 1-3 days each person had to spend in jail every time they were arrested, became the punishment for the 'crime' of serving free food in San Francisco."[25]

For eight years, on and off, the city charged that Food Not Bombs activists refused to agree to a health permit from the Parks and Recreations service and without a permit, the city was unable to know if the food was safe and healthy. Even though the city claimed that the group refused a permit, from July of 1989 to the changing of food serving laws in San Francisco the group had spent hundreds of hours writing and appealing for a permit (table 2). The group first asked for a permit on July 11, 1988, seven months after feeding the homeless and three months after receiving financial support from the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC). The HANC provided Food Not BOmbs a $1000 a month for rice, beans, and other staples and became a strong ally for the group in opposing the cities policies against the homeless and the Cole Valley Improvement Association, a more conservative business and homeowners association for the Haight section of the city.

After a few months of feeding without a permit on Stanton and Haight, right by Golden Gate Park, the Cole Valley Improvement Association began complaining to the city and police. The Cole Valley association argued that Food Not Bombs was bringing in undesirables into the neighborhood and that the Haight Neighborhood council only represented a small subsection of the Haight- the aging hippies and dead heads. According to Theresa Gaus, a spokeswoman for the Cole Valley Association stated, "The more free food we give away in the Haight the more problems we have. This is liberalism gone bad."[26] In general, the Cole Valley association, viewed homelessness as a serious problem for housing prices, business success, and public safety. In many letters to the editor Cole Valley members argued that the homeless are a threat to children.

In opposition, the HANC organization viewed the homeless and car campers in the Haight as members of their community. They also viewed the homeless as in need and the feeding as being a much-needed social service. In addition, this organization, comprised mostly of the districts counter-culture and marginalized voices, wanted to protect the Haight against gentrification and rising rental costs.

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In this regard, Food Not Bombs became a central player in what the Chronicle refereed to as "A Fight for the Soul of the Haight."[27]This fight was over what the Haight was about. On one side were middle-class families, business, and developers, while the other included aging hippies, leftists, the homeless, and racial minorities. Not surprisingly, the Cole Valley Association, with its larger budget and political influence, had the power to move City Hall and the police.

Starting in the beginning of August police started to harass Food Not bombs servings, claiming that without a permit that the activists could be arrested. The first arrests happened on August 15, 1988, when 14 officers arrested 9 activists for distributing food without a permit. They police also confiscated groups tabling supplies, including fliers, zines, and posters, and their serving pots and dishes. According to the Chronicle the "Police contend that the food handouts draw drug and alcohol abusers and other troublemakers to the park" and that the group breaks health and safety code.[28] In response, the city called for the group to move to a less visible location, and to begin serving at the Hamilton Methodist Church. The following week the Mayor's office backtracked as the mayor's office forbid the police from arresting Food Not bombs activists, while the Mayors aids tried to negotiate with the group to find a less visible, and official location for the feeding. According to Bob Prentice, the coordinator for homeless programs in San Francisco at the time, the mayors office did no "... want to be in a position of arresting people because they're giving good to hungry people" but that "they're going to have to relocate. That's pretty clearly the decision of the mayors office."[29] The group refused to move locations, arguing that visibility was important to their goal, and argued that feeding people should not require a permit.

By the next Monday the negotiations had broken down and Agnos has the police arrest Food Not Bombs activists. On August 29, 1988 29 activists where arrested after an impromptu rally of 100 people- comprised of Food Not Bombs activists, the homeless, and neighborhood supporters- marched down Height Street banging pots and pans while handing out fliers on San Francisco's policy of criminalizing the poor. The next Monday, which was Labor Day, brought two hundred people to Golden Gate Park to be feed, and approximately 50 police in riot gear. After the 25th meal was served (the legal limit before a permit is needed) the police moved in and arrested every person who tried to feed someone afterward. At the end of the day 54 people where arrested for distributing food without a permit.

The original negotiation breakdown, lead to a rise in arrests and marked a shift for the Agnos administration. Before the arrests of Food Not Bombs activists, Agnos was seen as one of the strongest supporters of homeless rights in San Francisco politics. Earlier in the year, Agnos told the police department to stop harassing people who slept in their cars, and his administration was working on a comprehensive homelessness plan. The Agnos plan was going to expand the number of single-room occupancy hotels. Under his program, whomever wanted a room, could check into a city supported private hotel, and less than 300 dollars would be automatically removed from any government assistance that a person may receiver. Agnos, even today, considers himself a strong supporter of homeless rights and a crusader for affordable housing. On his website Agnos discusses his negotiations with city squatters as well as his unwillingness to crack down on tent cities (more on this next), and his opposition to the Clinton housing

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policies. Even so, Food Not Bombs unwillingness to chance locations and limit their public presence seemed to get to the Agnos administration and the police department. Shortly after the Labor Day arrests Police spokesman Jerry Senkir stated, "This appears to be more of a political statement than a program to feed the hungry. We cannot allow them to take over the park."[30] In their unwillingness to allow the group to "take over the park" the police department arrested over 90 people for distributing food without a permit, all while the city attorneys office was unwilling to charge any of the activists with a crime.

The Labor Day arrest of 54 people ended up being a horrible media spectacle as local news crews, and national press -from The New York Times to CNN- took the issue to the public. In fact, a crewmember for a local TV network was injured by police while trying to arrest someone for distributing beans and rice. The media fallout from the Labor Day arrests promoted a drastic shift in the Agnos administration and on September 8, 1988 Mayor Agnos, city attorneys, representatives from the Parks and Recreations and Health departments, the ACLU and Food Not Bombs members met to discuss a "cease-fire." On September 9, an agreement was made between the two parties- but only after tensions where raised after Keith McHenry was detained by police for putting up a Food Not Bombs flier in the Haight district. McHenry felt that the arrest was a form of harassment by the city and showed the cities unwillingness to follow their promises. Even so, on September 9th, 1988 Agnos had a press conference in which he explained the "cease-fire" between Food Not Bombs and the city.

In the terms of the agreement, Food Not Bombs would move a few blocks to Stanyan and Page, and they would go through the process of getting permits from the Parks and Health departments. The city, for their part, would provide a 60-day temporary permit, waive the four hundred dollar fee for a permit, and drop all charges against Food Not Bombs activists. Agnos at the presses conference stated that "In enforcing the law, we don't want to create a remedy that is work than the problem" and that "we must develop a policy for this kind of program where people can be fed with dignity and in privacy."[31] It is important to note that to Agnos seemed to be more concerned with the public aspect of the feeding more than the health and safety of the issue. This might explain the reasons that tabling material (from tables to fliers and books) where confiscated and destroyed while the food was always donated to a local church homeless shelter. If the city thought the food to be prepared unsafe, and stored in unsanitary containers why would they donate the remanding food to churches and missions?

Though, a temporary permit was bestowed on Food Not Bombs, on September 10, 1988 the debate and politics surrounding a permanent permit was not finished (table 2). Only a few months after the first permit was given to Food Not Bombs, the Parks Service changed its laws regarding permitting. The new law strengthened the sanitation rules around the food. The new law required tables, sanitary metal containers, hand washing stations, and other basic sanitation services. At this time, the department was in the process of looking over Food Not Bombs process to decide if they would receiver a permanent permit. Even with the stricter rules, the city gave the group a permit to feed at Golden Gate Park on September 11, 1989- more than a year after negotiations began.

It took nearly another year for the group to receiver a permit to feed at Civic Center, something they had been doing twice a week for over a year. The Civic Center permit was muddled by further politics, as Food Not Bombs starting in June 1989 formed a 24 hour soup

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kitchen in Civic Center Park in support of a tent city protest organized by the cities homeless. The tent city protest, which came to be known as Camp Agnos, started after police started arresting and harassing the local homeless community, which made the park home. Agnos, in previous months, had told the homeless that as long as structures where not built and paths where not blocked that he would allow them to live within the park. According to news sources, the Agnos administration sent a letter to the inhabitants of the park claiming that "Tents and other permanent structures are not allowed: Personal property in excess of what be carried, such as couches and mattresses which interfere with others right to use the park is not allowed; accumulation of garbage, urinating, defecating, lighting fires and the unauthorized use of city electricity is prohibited."[32] But starting in July the police started ticketing homeless people and disposing of their belongings in the park. Homeless activists and allies- from Food Not Bombs to the San Francisco Coalition for the Homeless- organized a tent city vigil while Foot Not Bombs dedicated themselves to serving soup, beans, and rice, 24 hours a day during the vigil. The first reaction from the mayor was to leave the protesters and homeless alone, promising them that there would not be police sweeps if things where kept peaceful.

On July 11th, the Agnos administration set up a hearing on homelessness and invited members from Camp Agnos to speak. At that meeting, 13 homeless people from Camp Agnos addressed the mayor's office and provided some simply demands. Included in their wish list were public bathrooms, storage lockers, public showers, affordable housing, clean up equipment for the park, medical centers, detoxification centers, and other government service. The mayors office agreed with most of the demands, and included many of them in their homelessness plan of that year, but where openly opposed to any changes that would make the encampment more permanent, such lockers, public showers, and cleaning equipment. The following day activists from Food Not Bombs and the coalition to end homelessness occupied Art Agnos's office and demanded him to address the concerns with the homeless community. In the action one person was arrested, for distributing the peace, but by the end of the afternoon the mayors office agreed to some emergency issues, such as allowing people to cover themselves up at night, to protect against cold. [33]Agnos refused to meet with the activists but their actions where noticed by the administration and Agnos's opinion of the group shifted drastically from the action. Shortly following the office take over Agnos intensified his action arrested people on July 14th, 15th, 16th, and finally had the police completely clean the square by the 20th. By the end of the over two week occupation approximately 20 people where arrested, including 4 for distributing food without a permit.

During the two week occupation of Civic Center the Mayors office filed a lawsuit against Food Not Bombs. Assistant City attorney George Riley stated "all the city is attempting to do is enforce minimum safety standards...We don't seek to enjoin any expressive activities."[34] While Food Not Bombs on their lawyers argued unsuccessfully that their feedings where also a protect form of political speech. The courts disagreed and provided the city the needed court injunction against the group. Once the court injunction was implemented feeding people moved form a misdemeanor to a felony. The timing for the injunction was poor though as the court statement occurred the day after the tent city action was stopped by the police. After that action, Food Not Bombs continued to feed in the Civic Center and sporadically the city would charge one of the activists with breaking the injunction. By the end of the day though no activist served time in jail for breaking the injunction under the Agnos administration. If anything the possible felony

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was used as a deterrent for some activists and also provided an easy way for the police to remove the group from the square, confiscated their literature, tables, and pots, and increase the cost of being active.

By the beginning of February 1990 the court injunction against Food Not Bombs came to end as the city departments provided the group with the requisite permits needed. This legal position for Food Not Bombs was short lived though as the city on July 19, 1990 strengthened the minimum requirements to obtain a food distribution permit. This was followed by a serious of contentions and largely attended meeting on the new change to permitting procedure. Food Not Bombs argued that the strengthening of the law was done to make it harder for the group to legally distribute food while the city contended that they wanted to ensure that any food distributed in public was safe to consume. No matter what the reasoning for strengthening the law, the impact was that Food Not Bombs lost their permit and once again was serving food illegally.

Keith McHenry later wrote with C.T. Butler, regarding the issue of permits, "From the governments point of view, a permit is something it can take away whenever it wants (remember the Indian treaties?). Because of this, we strongly recommend that you not contact the local government. The revolution needs no permits."[35] Keith's hostility towards permits largely emerged form his ordeals with the city to obtain one. This is especially made harder since Agnos, and Jordan is successor, both argued that Food Not Bombs was hostile to city processes and unwilling to follow the required steps to receive a food distribution permit. This even though the group followed through with the permitting process for years and even after finally receiving a permit, it was rescinded as the rules for getting one where strengthened. In many ways, the city used the permit as a means of demonizing the group, making them appear unsupported, dangerous, and unconcerned with public safety. The group, and some other homeless groups, argued that Food Not Bombs was trying to politicize homelessness and hunger. For example, John Meehan, the coordinator with the Haight-Ashbury Food Program claimed: "Which is more important feeding people or politics? Humility is much needed here. The focus should be on the hungry, not politics."[36] Of course, what is unstated in this claim is the inherent political nature of homelessness and food politics. Politics cannot be removed from the issue of homelessness or hunger and trying to do so is a further example of how agency is removed from the homeless.

Table 2: Outline of Permitting Process for Food Not Bombs and the City of San Francisco 1988-1992

12/27/87	Food Not Bombs starts feeding homeless in San Francisco parks
07/11/88	FOOD NOT BOMBS requests a permit from the San Francisco Recreations and Parks Department
08/15/88	45 Riot police arrest nine volunteers for serving free food in Golden Gate Park
08/27/88	29 people arrested for serving free food in Golden Gate park

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09/01/88	52 people arrested for serving free food in Golden Gate park
09/09/88	Mayor Agnos issues the first permit (a 60 day temporary permit) to FOOD NOT BOMBS to serve free food in Golden Gate Park after two days of direct negotiations.
02/01/89	Parks service offers a second temporary permit for FOOD NOT BOMBS feedings in Golden Gate Park
07/21/89	FOOD NOT BOMBS issues a court injunction against serving free food without proper permits, during a homeless tent city in Civic Center.
09/11/89	The Health department issues FOOD NOT BOMBS its first health permit for feeding at Golden Gate Park
02/01/90	Recreations and Parks, Fire, and Health provide FOOD NOT BOMBS a permit for serving in Civic Center
07/06/90	The recreation and Parks commission passes a law making it illegal for anyone to be issues a permit to distribute free food outside
01/25/91	Keith McHenry is served with contempt papers for breaking a court injunction
02/14/91	City asks that Keith serve 40 days in jail for violation of court order
03/22/91	Judges dismiss injunction charges

Progressive Regimes of Governmentality

The hiding of homelessness from the public was the ideal goal for the Agnos administration. The fact that so much energy was spent to move the locations of Food Not Bombs feedings, on the confiscation of literature and tabling supplies, and that the food that was made was almost always donated to a church to serve at their services, all illustrate the central concerns of the city. Why though was the city so concerned with hiding homeless activism? Why was it that mass feedings from Food Not Bombs was considered a public health issue, while the food that was prepared was donated to others to serve in private?

Don Mitchell and Talmadge Wright express one potential way for understanding why the public view of homelessness was so threatening to the city. They both argue that homelessness is a threat to the security and safety of middle-class life. Seeing such poverty and hunger engenders feelings of disgust, pity, and possibly even fear.

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Another potential explanation is rooted in the later works of Michel Foucault, especially his lectures *Territory, Security and Populations* and *The Birth of Biopolitics*. Both of these lectures develop Foucault's concept of governmentality. According to Foucault governmentality is,

> The ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument.[37]

Thus, Governmentality, to Foucault, consists of more then just sovereignty and is something beyond creating and enforcing laws. Governmentality is instead, the "art of governing," a concept that emerged from the religious pastoral theories of the ancient Hebrews, but has combined with modern techniques of statistics and information gathering and the modern concern with security and stability. The goal of governmentality is to lead people, like a Shepard leads his flock, towards the "public good," which of course is public order and the maintenance of the state apparatus.

There are five central tasks for governmentality, in the modern state. They are: ensuring integration, providing bare-life essentials, ensure public health, reduce idleness, and maintain the flow of commerce. Discussing the role of governmentality Foucault claims,

> As its instrument, it will have to provide itself with whatever is necessary and sufficient for effectively integrating men's activity into the state, into its forces, and into the development of these forces, and it will have to ensure that the state, in turn, can stimulate, determine, and orientate this activity in such a way that it is in fact useful to the state.[38]

Thus the role of the governmentality, to Foucault, is to integrate political movements into a regulated and controlled way. This flows from his earlier work on sexuality or prisons in which the mechanisms of control are internalized, and individuals police themselves. This work, expands on his work on discipline, and examines how state apparatuses and the process of modern governing socialize us towards passivity.

There are nodes of resistance to governmentality. Foucault referred to them as "counter-conduct groups." These groups reject the basic premises of governmentality and refuse to conform. Instead they promote alternative views of obedience, wallow in revelry and excess, and attempt to reclaim space from governmentality. Historically, these forms of resistance seem to follow the resistance cataloged by Eric Hobsbawm in Primitive Rebels (1972) and included idleness, mysticism, and most importantly carnivals and festivals. Of course, with the development of modern governmentality and its advanced techniques of statistics and surveillance, modern counter-conduct movements must differ from earlier forms.

In describing the characteristics of the new counter-conduct groups Foucault claims that they need to have,

> Elements of society opposed to the state; economic truth in comparison with error, incomprehension, and blindness; the interest of all as opposed to private interest; the absolute value of the population as a natural and living reality; security in contrast with insecurity and danger; and freedom in contrast with rules and regulation.[39]

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In addition these new groups must reject entirely the concept of *raison d'Etat*, which means not only the rejection of the physical state but also the rejection of the state as an abstract concept. When you also take into account Foucault's hostility towards liberal political regimes and Marxist Leftism, which he saw as embracing the same logic of governmentality, it becomes obvious that the counter-conduct group must also radically break from the concept of sovereignty and governmentality. In other words, the new counter-conduct groups reject the state in both its physical and abstract senses, have a concern with social justice, and reject feelings of insecurity and danger. In addition, he envisions a world in which "civil society can free itself of the constraints and controls of the state, when the power of the state can finally be reabsorbed into this civil society."[40] This concept of social revolution versus political revolution is an inherent part of anarchist theory and was the central theoretical component to Mikhail Bakunins' work.

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